

PUSSY CAT

Talks to Her Kittens



by FANNIE E. MEAD

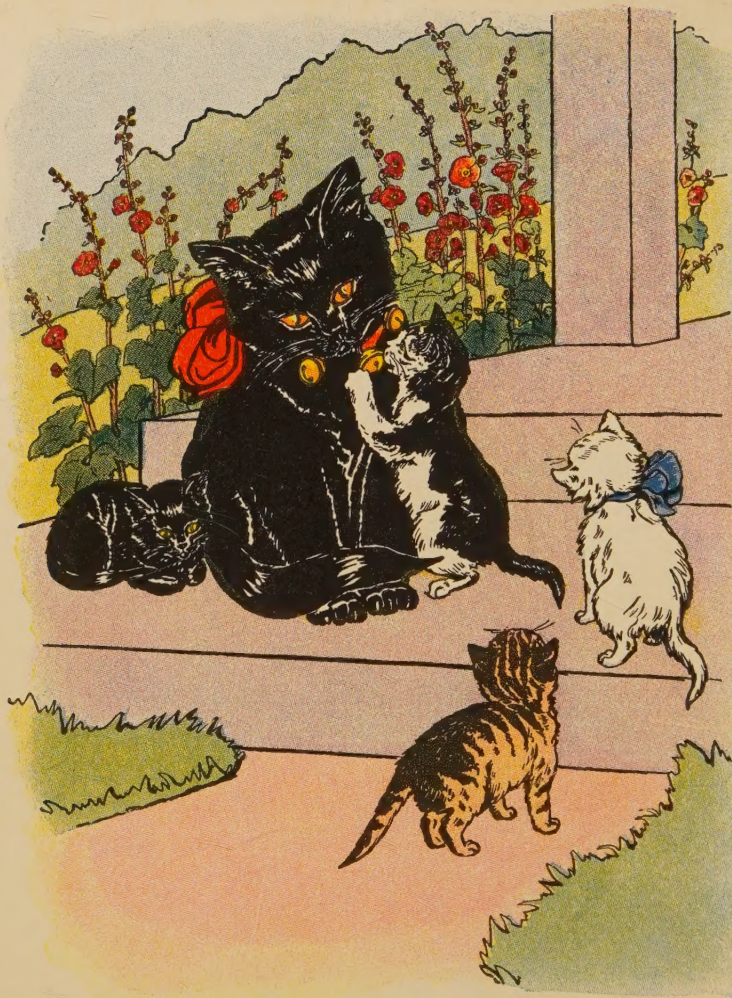
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HER KITTENS



Tuff tinkled one of the bells on Pussy Cat's collar

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By
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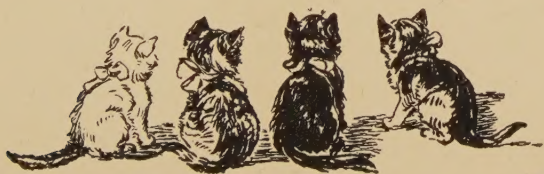
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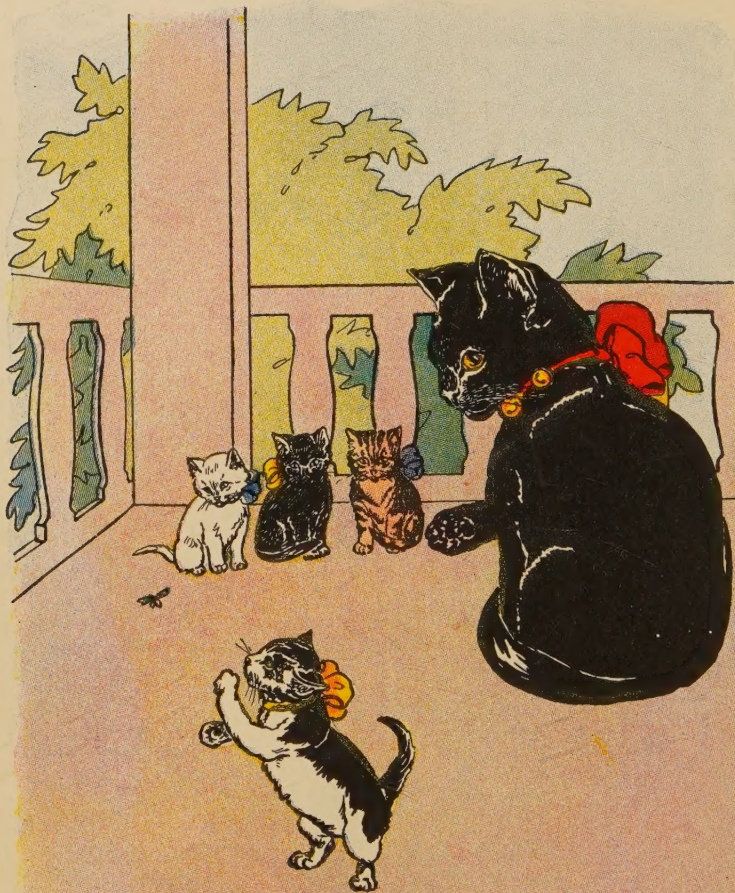


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THE CONTENTS

	PAGE
LESSON TIME	7
THE END OF A HOLIDAY	12
PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH	19
TUFF AND LESSON TIME	25
LEARNING TO HELP	30
MIND-YOUR-OWN-BUSINESS	36
A CATNIP SPREE	39
A LITTLE GIRL'S LESSON	45
P-R-O-C-R-A-S-T-I-N-A-T-I-O-N	50
THE KITTENS' FIRST PARTY	54
TABLE MANNERS	59





Pussy Cat meowed three times and raised her right front paw

PUSSY CAT TALKS TO HER KITTENS

LESSON TIME

Pussy Cat meowed three times and raised her right front paw. It was lesson time, and this was a signal for her four kittens to come to attention. Fluff, Ruff, and Buff did so at once, but Tuff stopped to jump at a fly and to catch a sunbeam which was playing hopscotch on the end of the porch where Pussy Cat had decided to hold her daily lesson.

Pussy Cat shook her head, making the bells on her collar tinkle noisily. Looking at Tuff, she said, "Meow-ow-ow!" which meant, "Stop playing and come here this minute, Miss Tuff!"

Tuff started to come, but something told her she had a little tail, and she thought it would be great fun to run round and round until she caught the end of it.

Tiny gay Fluff, who had taken her bright eyes from Mother Pussy Cat's face, saw what Tuff was up to and thought, "I'll help her." In a moment the two kittens looked like one round, fuzzy ball, and it was all Pussy Cat could do to get them apart and make them sit quietly in front of her.

Just as she had said, "Now, children, the subject of our lesson today is *gratitude*," Tuff, who never in her life had a serious moment, tried to bite the end of the blue ribbon around Ruff's neck. Pussy Cat was a kind and loving mother, but there was a limit even to her patience. She reached out her right paw and cuffed Tuff's ear. Mischievous Tuff always found something funny in everything, and, though the cuff hurt, she

forgot that in her great desire to play. Pretending her little legs would not hold



her up, she fell over on her back and began scratching her little pink nose with all four feet.

Pussy Cat said “Meow, M-e-e-e-e-e-ow” long and loud and then Tuff knew it was

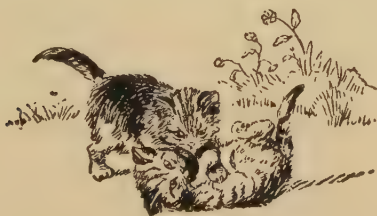
time to sit up and behave. Pussy Cat repeated, "The subject of our lesson today is *gratitude*. I want you to remember all I say. No matter how bad things may seem to be, there is always *something* for which you can be grateful.

"If a big, old grandma cat comes visiting and drinks all your milk, be grateful that you had the milk for her. Maybe her grandchildren are all away and there's no one at home to care for her. Maybe she has had no milk for days and days. If it rains and you can't go scampering over the cool, green grass and play among the flowers, be grateful that you have a nice, warm, dry kitchen to play in. If a big, cross-looking dog comes prowling around the porch, be grateful that you can scamper into the house and look at him through the screen door, knowing he cannot hurt you if he would. If you fall down the steps, be grateful that the grass is soft and velvety for you to fall

on. When night comes and you are sleepy and tired, be grateful that you have a nice box with a piece of flannel in the bottom for your bed.

“No matter what happens, if you look for it you will always find something for which you can be grateful. That’s all for today.”

As soon as Tuff heard this, she hopped on Buff, knocked him over, planted one of her little feet right in his mouth, and said, “Buffy, will you be grateful if I don’t eat you?”



THE END OF A HOLIDAY

It had been a holiday. All day the big house had been filled with visitors. Pussy Cat had been obliged to postpone her lesson until evening, as her family were expected to help entertain some of the younger guests. Fluff, Buff, Ruff, and Tuff had played ball with the older children, rolled on the grass with the babies, allowed them to pull their ears and tails, and generally made all the guests welcome.

Now it was evening, and Pussy Cat found that many calls were necessary to get Fluff, Ruff, Buff, and Tuff to the lower one of the two steps leading into the summer-house. She saw the kittens were all tired. Tuff, who had been busiest of all, was lying flat on her side, one eye closed, and the other with no sign of a mischievous look in it.



Fluff, Buff, Ruff, and Tuff played ball with the older children

Pussy Cat said, "Children, I know you're tired, but I want to call certain things to your attention before you forget what has happened today. I want to tell you that there is good in everyone, and if you hunt hard enough you'll find it.

"Just because the visitor with the big cane pushed you aside and said, 'Get out,' you thought he was cross. But by and by when he was sitting in the big chair under the elm tree he amused Fluff and Buff for a long time slowly moving the cane back and forth in the grass, plainly inviting them to catch it. He really loves kittens but doesn't like them under his feet when he is walking. You see, he might step on one and hurt it.

"And you thought the lady in the pretty lace dress fussy when she said, "Now don't jump on *me*." But this afternoon when she tied a string through an empty spool and dangled it for an hour for you, you found



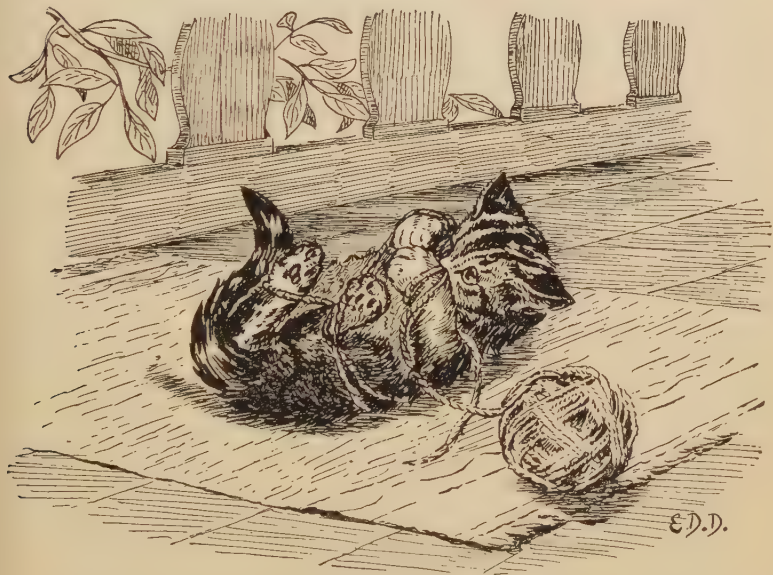
Pussy Cat said, "Children, I know you're tired"

that she, too, was good and wished to amuse you. Of course you didn't understand that the reason the lady did not want you to jump on her lace dress was because your sharp little claws might tear it. When she took Ruff up and cuddled him against her face, she whispered something in his ear which told him plainly that *she*, too, loved little kittens."

At this point Tuff, the mischievous little imp, sat up, trotted over close to Mother Pussy Cat, reached up one little paw and tinkled one of the bells on Pussy Cat's collar. "Well, what is it?" asked Mother Pussy Cat.

Tuff showed her sharp little white teeth and said, "There's nothing about the lady with the yellow hair to love. When she dropped a ball of yarn on the porch this afternoon I did everything I could to push the ball back to her. I hopped all around it, got two feet all tied up in it and nearly choked

when the end got around my neck. Then all she did was to smack me, and tell me I'd spoiled her yarn and to run away."



"Oh," said Pussy Cat, "she didn't understand what you were trying to do. If she had known you were trying to help, she wouldn't have smacked you. I remember when the maid brought her a glass of milk, she poured a little of it in a saucer and

gave it to you. Wasn't that kind, and couldn't you love her a bit for that?"

"Well," said Tuff saucily, "I had just been out on the kitchen porch and had all the milk I could drink, so I didn't need hers."

"Yes," said Pussy Cat, "but her kindness was there just the same, and you must love people for what they mean to do, even though you do not need the kindness."

"It's late. Scamper off to bed and just as you shut your eyes say, 'There is good in everybody. Mother Pussy Cat says so, and she knows.'"



PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

As the sun was setting, Pussy Cat scampered up a tree, slowly crept out on a big branch, and, hidden from view by the thick green leaves, settled down for a quiet think. She had already decided upon the day's lesson, but first she needed to learn it well herself. This is why she had gone away alone where she could think it all out quietly.

Ever since she could remember, Pussy Cat had been allowed to doze and sleep on the soft red cushion in the big old-fashioned Boston rocker. Long, long before Pussy Cat's time this rocker belonged to Grandma Simpson. Now the seat was almost gone, and the rocker had been pushed far back into a corner of the kitchen. No one sat in it any more; so Pussy Cat considered it her own, and here, resting in the old rocker,

she thought out many of her plans for the kittens. But today the old rocker had been



put on a second-hand dealer's wagon and sent away.

Pussy Cat was hurt and cross at losing her chair. She was sure the new cook was to blame, for she had heard her say, "I don't want the old thing in my kitchen." Pussy Cat found it hard to forgive this. Yet, forgive her she really must, if she was

to be an example for Fluff, Ruff, Buff, and Tuff.

After thinking it over for some time, she left her perch in the tree, meowed loudly three times, and sat down to await the coming of her family. They came scampering from four different directions—Fluff dignified with a new blue ribbon around her neck, and Ruff looking sheepish, as he had just stuck one of his paws in the cream meant for the table. Buff came more slowly, for he had stepped on a piece of gum a mischievous boy had put on the porch where he was playing.

Tuff ran so fast she couldn't stop and, bumping against Pussy Cat, tried to hop on her back. Pussy Cat said, "Mmm-ur," and looked as if she'd say much more if Tuff tried it again. But Tuff had discovered a nice father worm hurrying home with his family's supper. She made up her mind to worry him a little, and so, patting him with

her soft paw, Tuff rolled him over on his back and then tried to gather him up between her two front paws. The father worm wriggled and wriggled while Tuff tossed him about as if he were a feather. But just as Tuff really had him, Pussy Cat said, "Tuff, will you ever learn to behave? Come here with your sister and brothers and listen to your lesson.

"The lesson is about forgiveness. If you expect to be forgiven for your naughty ways, you must always be ready to forgive others. You are old enough to understand that you have no right to expect what you will not give in return. So, when you think you've been wronged, just bravely look the whole thing in the face and make up your mind to love and forgive. Never go to sleep at night until you have forgiven everybody. Then you can rightfully ask that you be forgiven of any wrong you have done. It is a mark of bravery to forgive freely, and



Tuff discovered a nice father worm hurrying home

I'm sure all my children want to be brave."

Tuff scratched her head back of her ear and asked, "Mother Pussy Cat, must I forgive Buff for eating the nice piece of bread Cook had soaked in gravy for me?"

Before Pussy Cat could answer, Fluff piped up shrilly, "Yes, you must, if you expect me to forgive you for eating the bit of white chicken meat Helen gave me."

"That's it," said Pussy Cat. "You must all forgive one another."



TUFF AND LESSON TIME

Pussy Cat, like all good mothers, sleeps with one eye open so she may never lose sight of her children. So, although she seemed to be dozing comfortably on the cushioned seat under the big elm tree, she saw Ruff walk round and round a big box which stood in the middle of the path leading from the garage to the house. She knew he was anxious to learn what was in the box and from his actions she knew he was afraid of it.

This gave her an idea for the kittens' lesson for that day. She thought that if she could put fear of all kinds out of the minds of her little family she would have done a great deal to make them happy and useful.

At lesson time Pussy Cat's eyes were very bright. She had made a careful toilet, and now her silky black fur shone as though it

had been brushed and combed. Giving her usual signal of three shrill meows, she waited for the kittens to come.

The weather was so beautiful and the kittens were so interested in their playing that a fourth long shrill "m-e-o-w-" was needed before they appeared. For a wonder little black-and-white Tuff was the first. Pussy Cat couldn't help suspecting that she was up to mischief and so watched her carefully. Fluff, Ruff, and Buff scampered up, and the class was complete.

As soon as they were all comfortably seated, Tuff picked up a feather she had dropped beside her and running around next to Ruff tickled his nose and eyes until he sneezed twice. She was about to try the same thing on Fluff, when Pussy Cat, quickly standing on her four feet, said sternly, "Tuff, bring me that feather." Tuff waited a moment, and then minded. But just before dropping the feather, she managed to twist



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Pussy Cat said sternly, "Tuff, bring me that feather"

it so that Pussy Cat's nose got a good tickle which made her sneeze.

It took a minute or two to quiet the kittens. Then Pussy Cat, looking quite serious, said, "The lesson today is important. I want you to understand that there is no reason ever to be afraid. If you are thinking right thoughts and doing right things you need never fear anything. But if you let fear come into your thoughts you are pretty sure to have the very troubles of which you are afraid. If you say, 'I'm doing right and thinking loving thoughts, and so nothing can harm me,' you will find that wherever you may be you will be kept from danger.

"I'm not going to say, 'Be careful,' for I'm sure if you are doing right and thinking loving thoughts you will be careful."

Just then Pussy Cat noticed Buff was falling asleep. She shook the bells on her collar until they tinkled loudly, and then

she called his name sternly. Tuff, the little rascal, said, "Mother Pussy Cat, Buff isn't afraid to go to sleep right at lesson time, is he?"

Pussy Cat closed her bright eyes for a second so she might not see Tuff's funny little face, and said, "When you are doing the right thing, you shouldn't know fear."

"Well," said Tuff, "I must have been doing right when I tickled your nose with a feather 'cause I wasn't a bit afraid."

Pussy Cat blinked and shook her head slowly. It certainly was a task to teach saucy Tuff.



LEARNING TO HELP

It was house-cleaning time and everybody was trying to help; even the little children were busy fetching and carrying. Pussy Cat was almost stepped on several times as she roamed from room to room, watching the work going on. She had told the kittens to keep out of the house, to stay near the garage, and not to annoy any one. Then they too would be helping.

Pussy Cat saw that, when each person planned his work so as to help the others, it made it much easier for all. All at once she thought how nice it would be to teach the kittens to be helpful. If they learned this while young, they'd be doing helpful things all their lives.

So Pussy Cat planned her daily lesson and went down to the garage. Fluff and little black Ruff were sound asleep, having



Fluff and little black Ruff were curled up sound asleep

worn themselves out playing with a golf ball they had found in a seat in one of the automobiles. Pussy meowed gently and leaning down purred softly close to their ears. First one kitten and then the other slowly opened his eyes, stretched himself, and began washing his face. Tiny black Ruff seemed to have a hard time getting one eye open, for he washed and washed and washed it.

Meanwhile Mother Pussy Cat stepped outside, meowed loudly, and looked all around for the other two kittens. At last Tuff peeped around one corner of the garage, and in a few seconds Buff's tiger-striped head came around another corner. As soon as Tuff saw Buff she disappeared, only to return in a minute and peek again. Then Buff would disappear. Pussy Cat knew they were playing hide and seek; so she let them play the game several times before calling again.



Tuff made a leap for the yellow butterfly

At this call Buff stopped playing and came to her, but Tuff, the little rascal, ran all the way around the garage, surprising Pussy Cat by coming around the same corner Buff had. Just then a yellow butterfly flew close to Pussy Cat's head and Tuff made a leap for it. She missed it and, falling back, caught her foot in one of the bows of the ribbon around Buff's neck, tipped him over, and held him down, for her leg had gone through the bow clear up to her body.

Buff didn't like this. He meowed as loudly as he could, and managing to get his two front legs around Tuff's foreleg, pulled her down to the ground. Here the two kittens scuffled until Pussy Cat, scolding hard, told them to stand up. This was difficult to do, for in their twistings and turnings the ribbon had tightened around Tuff's leg. If Jerry, the chauffeur, hadn't happened along, there's no telling how the kittens would have got out of their scrape.

Laughing, he picked up the kittens, untangled them, and said to Pussy Cat, "*Some* children you have, Mrs. Bright Eyes!"

As soon as the kittens had settled down, Pussy Cat began her lesson. "I want you all to be known as helpful kittens. I want you to promise never to miss a chance to help others, even though you have to stop doing something for yourselves. You can come back and finish that after you have helped the other person. Don't wait until you're asked to help. When you see a chance to help another, take hold. You'll always be happier for having helped somebody else.

"Helping teaches us not to be selfish, and of all unhappy people in the world, the selfish ones are the most unhappy. So, no matter what you are doing, keep your eyes and ears open for the little hint that means help is needed. Now, if Jerry hadn't heard Buff's call for help, you might have choked him; so you see what Jerry's prompt help did."

MIND-YOUR-OWN-BUSINESS

Pussy Cat was stretched out idly on the roof of the porch just outside a second-story window. Suddenly she heard voices coming through the window from the room within. The voices were loud, and she could easily hear what was being said. This told her that one member of the family was trying hard to pry into a little secret of another member. Finally, the latter became so annoyed he told the other that the affair was none of his business.

This was unusual talk for Pussy Cat to hear; so she jumped upon the window sill to make sure who the speakers were. Much to her surprise she saw two of her kittens playing under the couch. She was sure they must have heard the unpleasant remarks and at once decided to give them a lesson on *mind-your-own-business*.

At lesson hour Pussy Cat said, "There are many faults which make trouble for those



who have them, as well as for almost everybody they meet. One of the worst faults is that of minding-other-people's-business.

“Now, I want you to pay strict attention to what I am going to tell you. If you mind your own business, you won’t have time to mind that of another person. If you go snooping around getting mixed up with other people’s business, you’ll soon be known as a pest and a nuisance. Never give advice unless you are asked for it.

“Now, I want you to repeat after me all together very softly these words, ‘I will mind my own business—I will mind my own business—*I will mind my own business.*’”

Fluff, Ruff, Buff, and Tuff repeated the words. Then Tuff added, “I’ll be minding my own business if I run around to the kitchen door and get a nice little piece of fish the cook said she would save for me.”

A CATNIP SPREE

Away down back of the garage, near the edge of the road, grew some catnip. Ruff found it one day when he had wandered farther from home than usual. After rolling in it to his heart's content, he ran home and told his brother and sisters about it. They didn't wait a minute, but hurried off to this spot which meant so much fun and joy for them.

They turned somersaults in the catnip, rolled over and over in it again and again, much like bouncing rubber balls. It wasn't until Pussy Cat came clear down to the bed of catnip that they heard her call to lesson.

Pussy Cat always tried to be dignified and to set a good example for her family, but the scent of catnip was too much even for her, and, forgetting everything else, she too rolled over and over in it.

This was fun for the kittens, and Tuff scrambled all over Pussy Cat, jumping at her whiskers, nipping her ears, and making



the bells on her collar ring until they played little jingly tunes. Pussy Cat and her kittens acted as if they had all gone wild.

Ruff, feeling lonely, strolled back to the catnip bed. Although he had had a fine

time in it, he could not sit still and watch Pussy Cat and the other kittens frolicking so gaily. So in he jumped, adding one more crazy kitten to the bunch. In their frolic, each one seemed to be trying to outdo the others, and by and by they forgot to be careful. Every now and then a loud, shrill cry told that a sharp claw had scratched somebody.

Finally, the frolic seemed to have turned into a fight, and Mother Pussy Cat knew it was time to stop it. This wasn't easy to do. You see the kittens had forgotten it was merrymaking and now were really angry with one another.

But Pussy Cat never allowed her children to rule, and so she brought them to attention with three piercing meows, which meant, "Come right out of that bed of catnip, and learn the lesson I'm going to give you!

"First, I must say you have made me sad, and ashamed of you. Ever since your

little eyes first opened, I have tried to teach you to be gentle, and yet, the way you've been behaving, one would never imagine you had heard the word. You have been acting like little wildcats. Now each must beg the others' pardon. To be gentle should be the aim of everybody, because by being gentle we escape many unhappy things.

"Now, Tuff, you and Buff go on ahead; Fluff and Ruff follow. I shall watch you all the way home, and if I see anything but gentleness I shall punish the offender. Had you been content to play and be gentle, we might still be enjoying the catnip bed. You were not, and so we're going home. I'm sorry to know my family could so forget what they had been taught."

Tuff, the little black-and-white rascal, stopped, turned around, and said slyly, "Mother Pussy Cat, if we are good and kind for a long time, may we go back to the catnip bed?"



"Mother Pussy Cat, if we are good may we go back to the catnip bed?"

“Until I’m sure you mean to be gentle with one another, I shall send you down there one at a time.”

“Meow, meow,” said Fluff sadly, “going alone won’t be any fun.”

Then Buff meowed softly, “Mebbe if we’re good kittens, Mother Pussy Cat will change her mind and let us all go back together.”



A LITTLE GIRL'S LESSON

Strolling through the garage, Pussy Cat overheard the master of the house talking earnestly with his little daughter Helen. Pussy Cat knew it was bad manners to listen. But she had great respect for the master because he was so good and kind to her and everybody else. "Perhaps I can learn something to teach the kittens," she thought. "So maybe I could be excused for listening this time."

Then Pussy Cat lay down, shut her eyes, and listened to what the master had to say. With his arm about his little daughter he told her kindly but firmly he was sorry to learn that she didn't love her governess. Helen began to make excuses. But her father said he had chosen the governess carefully and was sure if his little daughter tried to find something in her to love, all

the things she didn't like would be forgotten. He closed his little talk by saying, "Love never fails to bring love."

Helen and her father left the garage, and Pussy Cat, rubbing her head with her right paw, thought, "I hope I can make that as plain to the kittens as master did to Helen. I'm sure he's right. I remember Aunt Edna didn't like me when I first came here to live. She said, 'That cat can never come into my room.' But by and by she came to like me ever so much. I followed her around or sat quietly beside her with my back hunched up and purred softly. At first she paid no attention to me, but my fondness for her finally won her, and I almost laughed aloud one day when she picked me up and said, 'My, but you're a pretty little thing, and you must like me, you stick around so!'"

As Pussy Cat left the garage, she saw Fluff, the dainty little Maltese, trying to

play with the weeds the gardener had just pulled from the pansy bed. Evidently the gardener didn't wish them scattered about, for he gave Fluff a slap with his cap and said, "Get away!" Fluff showed a little



temper and tried to scratch his hand. This made the gardener angry, and he shoved her out of his way.

Remembering this at class time, Pussy Cat said, "Children, you are never too young

to learn the wise things that may be of use to you all your lives. Now love is the greatest and best thing any of us has to give to others, and no matter how things look to us, *love never fails to bring love.*

"Now, Fluff, when the gardener told you this morning to run away, instead of scratching him you should have run a little distance away from him and played around, not touching what he told you to leave alone. When the wind blew a weed back on the place he had cleared, if you had taken it in your little mouth and carried it over to the pile of rubbish and dropped it there, he would have thought you a useful, well-behaved little kitten. Then he might have put you in the little cart with his baby boy, who really wanted a chance to pet you."

"That's right," said little black Ruff. "Because the other day when the little bit of a white woolly dog came here visiting, I just laughed when he barked his funny little

bark at me. Then I rolled my marble over to him. He only waited a moment before rolling it back, and we played together happily for a long time. I told him I loved little white woolly dogs, and he said some-



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body told him dogs didn't like kittens, but now he knew it wasn't true."

Pussy Cat nodded her approval and said, "Always remember, children, to show love toward everybody, no matter what people may say or do, for *love makes all things right.*"

P-R-O-C-R-A-S-T-I-N-A-T-I-O-N

Cousin Addie had come from far away to make a visit and had brought her Poll Parrot. Polly was now in her swing on the porch. All morning Pussy Cat had been hearing faint little meows. Thinking one of the kittens was calling, she ran here and there, only to find that it was Poll Parrot mimicking the kitten's cry. Poll's teasing had kept her so busy she had not noticed that much of the work she had given her children to do had been left undone.

From time to time the kittens had been given playthings—balls, marbles, rubber rings, and little rubber animals that whistled when they were bitten. These they had scattered all over the lawn. Pussy Cat had given orders for each kitten to pick up his own playthings and put them in the box just inside the door of the garage.



Polly was in her swing on the porch mimicking the kitten's cry

The kittens were having so much fun playing tag they'd put off doing what they were told to do. The new gardener, going over the grounds and finding these playthings lying about, picked them up and dropped them into a bag he was carrying for bits of paper and odds and ends that didn't look well on the lawn.

When Pussy Cat called the children for their lesson, the first question she asked them was, "Have you put your playthings away?"

All four kittens hung their heads. Then Tuff said slowly, "I guess we all forgot."

Pussy Cat went on, "Today your lesson will be about putting off things. Not to do at once what you are told to do is naughty. There is a long word for this. You are too little to understand such a big word, but in order that you may remember it, you must all learn to spell the word. It is P-r-o-c-r-a-s-t-i-n-a-t-i-o-n."

“Mercy on us!” meowed Fluff. “All the letters in the alphabet must be in that word.”

Ruff, who had been trying hard not to cry, whimpered, “The gardener took my best little pig, the one that whistled when I bit him, and threw him away.”

“Had you picked up the pig as I told you to,” said Pussy Cat, “you wouldn’t have lost it. I hope it will be a lesson that you will remember as long as you live.”



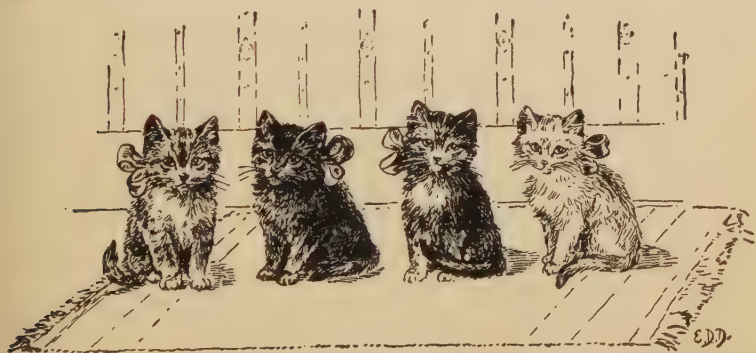
THE KITTENS' FIRST PARTY

It was Helen's birthday. She was twelve years old and was giving an afternoon party for all her little friends.

Everything in the house had been made ready for the party. It was nearly noon and time for Pussy Cat and her four kittens to get into their party clothes. They were all taken to the nursery where their fur was to be brushed and bright new ribbons tied on. Pussy Cat, of course, being old enough to understand, sat quietly and peaceably. In a short time she was looking beautiful, her black fur all shining and glistening, and a big ribbon bow the color of an American Beauty rose tied on her collar of bells.

The kittens were as naughty as they could be, squirming and playing so that those who were dressing them lost their patience. If

Pussy Cat hadn't sternly meowed her disapproval of their behavior and told them to be quiet, there's no saying what might have happened. Finally all were brushed, each with a new ribbon around its neck, looking like a *Blue Ribbon* prize kitten.



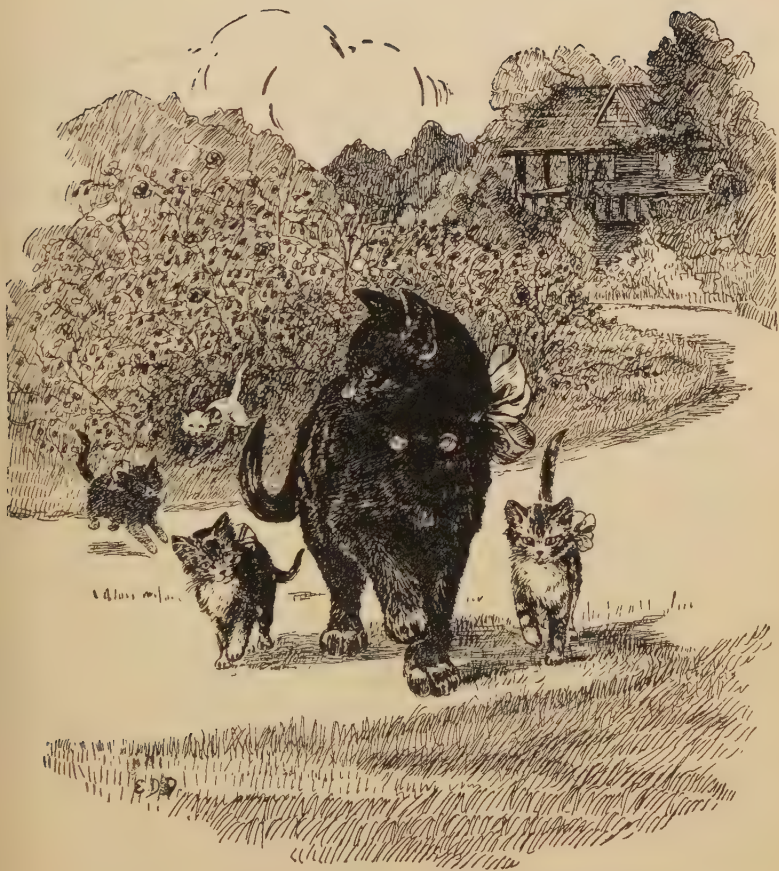
The party was a great success, and Pussy Cat and the kittens were greatly admired. But after it was over Tuff didn't feel good. She had greedily licked up too much of the ice cream that had been left in the saucers, selfishly trying to get more of it than her sister and brothers. Everything else had gone off nicely.

When the children had gone home, Pussy Cat told her kittens to follow her, and led them out on the lawn, quite a little way from the house.

Little tiger Buff meowed crossly and said, "Mother Pussy Cat I'm tired and sleepy. Can't we skip the lesson today?"

Pussy Cat said, "No, Buff, you all need this lesson. You can go to bed as soon as it's over, but now you must listen to what I have to say. When we were being dressed for the party, you were all cross and naughty. Soon the people who were getting you ready were cross, too. You know bad manners are just as catching as good manners. I know Aunt Edna wanted to smack Fluff good and hard with the brush she was using. If I hadn't been there I'm sure she would have done it, too.

"Now, you must learn to be patient. Very few worth-while things can be done in a minute, and impatience won't hurry the



Pussy Cat told her kittens to follow her out on the lawn

doing at all. When you find you are losing your patience and growing cross, just stop a second and ask yourself, 'What good will that do me?' Try to answer this question truly. You will soon learn that when you are impatient, instead of helping things you make them worse. When you get excited, you excite the other person. Then trouble comes right up to both of you. While if you are patient and wait, going a little slowly, whatever is to be done will be done easily. You'll feel better. The other person will feel all right. You won't have said cross, ugly things. Everybody will speak of you kindly and think of you lovingly.

"But certainly you all look sleepy. I think your first party was a bit too much for you."

"Oh, no, no!" said Tuff, "not too much, Mother Pussy Cat, just enough."

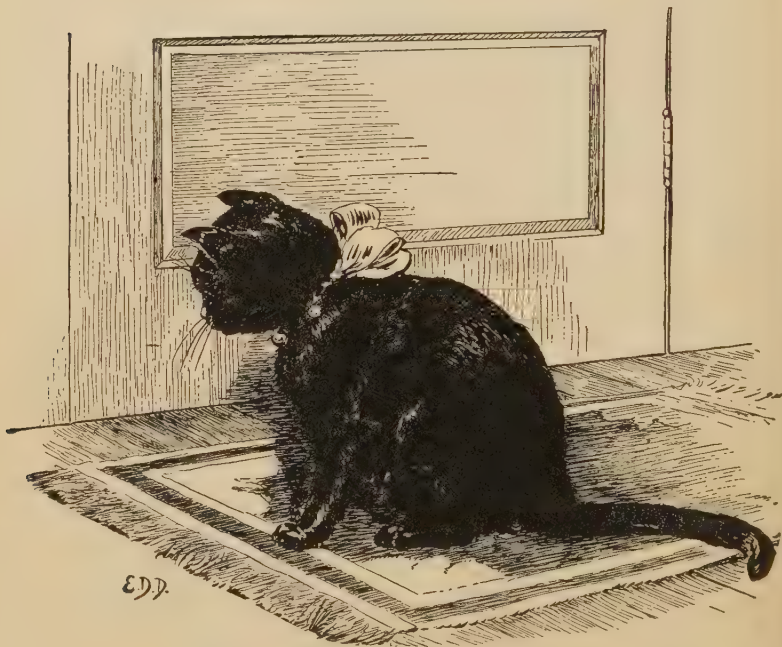
TABLE MANNERS

A little mouse gnawing in a corner of the closet kept Pussy Cat awake nearly all night. Pussy Cat knew only a mouse could make that noise and so could not sleep. She felt it was her duty to get the mouse and stop the gnawing. But how could she get into the closet? The door was closed fast.

This bothered Pussy Cat, for she was a faithful mouser. So she sat quietly by the door, hoping by some magic it would spring open, and thought of her four kittens. She had overheard that day a long and severe lesson on table manners and a good deal of it she thought could be used in training Fluff, Ruff, Buff, and Tuff.

She had not been a foolish mother. She did not think that the kittens were so tiny it would be better to wait and begin training them when they were bigger. She had

begun her teaching early, but the kittens were so full of play that it was a task to make them at all times remember the rules



of good breeding. When the little mouse got tired of gnawing and stopped, Pussy Cat, instead of going to sleep, went carefully over the lesson for the next day.

“The kittens are big enough now to be invited out,” she said, “and I certainly should be ashamed if they behaved badly at mealtime. Tomorrow I must talk to them earnestly.”

The kittens noticed that all day Mother Pussy Cat seemed very serious, and they wondered why. But as soon as it was lesson hour they knew, for she not only called them together sharply, but hopped up on a chair and sat there stiff and straight waiting for their attention.

The kittens came quickly at her call. Tuff, as usual refusing to be serious, hopped up on the chair beside Pussy Cat, and, trying to copy her mother, also sat up straight and stiff. She looked funny sitting there, because a bur had fastened the tip end of her tail up on her back. Tuff was not very comfortable, but she had learned long ago that she always needed help to get rid of a bur.



When Buff and Ruff landed on it, the chair tipped, and over it went

"Oh, look at Tuff's tail! Look!" said Ruff. Then they all laughed. Pussy Cat tried not to join them, but it was hard work to keep a sober face, for Tuff certainly did look funny. Helen, coming up the walk, came to the little black-and-white's rescue and took off the bad old bur, laughing until she cried.

When Tuff found her tail was free, she at once lay down on her back and with her front paws made every bell on Pussy Cat's collar go tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. At this Fluff jumped up on the chair, and then Buff and Ruff followed. The chair really stood on only three legs, the fourth being rickety, so when Buff and Ruff landed on it, the chair tipped, and over it went, spilling Pussy Cat and all the kittens on the floor.

"Humph!" thought Pussy Cat. "It will be hard work now to quiet these kittens, and I'm sleepy anyway from last night's watch. I think I'll just have them repeat

the little verse I taught them the other day
and save my *table-manners* lesson for
another day."

So she said, "Now, children, all together:

"There were four kittens
With soft fur mittens,
Whose eyes were blue and bright:
They loved their mother,
And loved one another,
And love makes all things right."



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